

Message Text

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CUBAN MILITARY ADVENTURISM IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND ITS REPERCUSSIONS ON GUYANA'S RELATIONS WITH BRAZIL AND VENEZUELA

1. DURING 90-MINUTE MEETING MARCH 31 WITH FONMIN FRED WILLS WHICH RAMBLED OVER WATERFRONT, THERE WAS A PATTERN OF THOUGHT WHICH I HAVE PIECED TOGETHER AS FOLLOWS: I FOUND HIM STILL VERY PREOCCUPIED WITH STATE OF GUYANA'S RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS AND COMITANTLY WITH PROSPECT OF ESCALATING MILITARY HOSTILITIES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA IN WHICH CUBA IS LIKELY TO BE DIRECTLY INVOLVED AND IN RELATION TO WHICH GUYANA WILLYNILLY MUST LINE UP ALONGSIDE CUBA. WILLS SEEMED TO APPRECIATE THAT GUYANA'S APPARENT CLOSER IDENTITY WITH CUBA HAS THE COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE EFFECT OF AROUSING SUSPICION ON THE PART OF BRAZILIAN AND VENEZUELAN GOVTs, AND IS IMPELLING THEM TOWARDS A DE FACTO COLLABORATION IN WHAT IS NOAO

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LOCALLY DESCRIBED BY THE CODE WORD QUOTE DESTABILIZATION UNQUOTE.

2. STARTING FROM THE SITUATION IN AFRICA, WILLS SAID HE HAD COME TO THE CONCLUSION THAT THE CUBANS TOOK THE LEAD IN MOUNTING THEIR MILITARY EXPEDITION IN ANGOLA. SOVIETS, HE SAID, WERE AT FIRST DISTURBED, BUT AFTER THE SOUTH AFRICAN INTERVENTION THE SOVIETS REVERSED THEMSELVES AND THEREAFTER WERE AS GUNG-HO AS THE CUBANS. THE SO-CALLED QUOTE CUBAN MILITARY GLORY UNQUOTE IN ANGOLA IS A DOUBLE-EDGED PROPOSITION, BECAUSE IF OVERPLAYED IT CAN ONLY SERVE TO UNDERCUT THE AUTHORITY AND VIABILITY OF MPLA GOVT. MOREOVER, IF THE CUBANS NOW BEGIN TO BE INVOLVED IN SUPPORTING GUERRILLA OPERATIONS IN RHODESIA, WORKING FROM BASES IN MOZAMBIQUE, THE AURA OF CUBAN MILITARY PROWESS IS LIKELY TO STIR MACHISMO OF CERTAIN TRIBAL ELEMENTS IN RHODESIA INTO EMULATIVE VIOLENCE. WILLS FEARS THIS COULD LEAD TO A GENUINE BLOOD BATH. WILLS EXPLAINED THAT WITHOUT THE CUBAN PRESENCE, THERE MIGHT BE A BETTER PROSPECT OF UNITY AMONG THE ZIMBABWE LIBERATION GROUPS AND THEREFORE GREATER PRESSURE ON SMITH TO COME TO TERMS WITH THEM.

3. WILLS SAID HE WAS BECOMING MORE PESSIMISTIC BY THE WEEK ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR SOLUTIONS IN RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA WITHOUT A MAJOR MILITARY CAMPAIGN. THIS, HE WENTON, WOULD INEVITABLY CREATE PROBLEMS FOR GUYANA SINCE THE BURNHAM GOVT HAS NO LOGICAL PLACE TO GO EXCEPT TO CONTINUE ITS BACKING OF AFRICAN MAJORITY RULE AND, ALONG WITH IT, CUBA'S SUPPORTING ROLE. WHILE HE MADE HIS USUAL IMPASSIONED PLEAS FOR A CHANGE IN USG POLICY TOWARD SOUTHERN AFRICA, WILLS SEEMED EQUIALLY PESSIMISTIC ON THIS SCORE, ALLEGING THAT THE DOMESTIC ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN WOULD INHIBIT ANY MOVEMENT FROM PRESENT POSTURE.

4. WILLS THEN TURNED TO THE ATTITUDE OF THE US TOWARD CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA. HE SAID HE HAD TAKEN CAREFUL NOTE OF SECRETARY KISSINGER'S FORMULA, I.E. THAT ANSWER TO THE CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA LIES IN THE CARIBBEAN. HE CONTINUED BY REFERRING TO RECENT PRESS STORIES PORTRAYING USG AS DUSTING OFF CONTINGENCY PLANS WHICH CONTEMPLATE INTER ALIA ANOTHER BLOCKADE OF CUBA. HE SAID SOME OF THESE ARTICLES AND SOME PRIVATE EXTRAPOLATIONS FROM THEM IMPLIED THAT GUYANA WOULD BE A LIKELY SECONDARY FOCUS OF ANY USG BLOCKADE ON CUBA. HOWEVER HE WAS INCLINED NOT TO GIVE TOO MUCH CREDENCE TO THE LATTER, SINCE FOR ONE THING HE

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UNDERSTOOD THAT FUTURE CUBAN TROOP LIFTS TO AND FROM AFRICA WOULD BE HANDLED BY LONG-RANGE SOVIET JET TRANSPORTS CAPABLE OF CARRYING FULL LOADS NONSTOP FROM CUBA TO CAPE VERDE ISLANDS OR EVEN TO AFRICAN MAINLAND. MOREOVER HE SAID THE BLOCKADE OF CUBA WOULD HAVE TO BE EFFECTIVE ON THE PERIMETER OF THE ISLAND ITSELF IF IT WAS TO BE EFFECTIVE AT ALL, AND THIS WOULD THEREFORE RULE OUT ANY SECONDARY BLOCKADE OF GUYANA.

5. STILL, WILLS WENT ON, THE RECENT SPATE OF ARTICLES IN THE BRAZILIAN AND VENEZUELAN PRESS, WHICH WERE SPARKED BY UNFOUNDED

REPORTS OF CUBAN MILITARY ADVISORS IN GUYANA, REFLECTED A CONTINUING PROBLEM FOR GUYANA GROWING OUT OF ITS INCREASINGLY CLOSE IDENTIFICATION WITH CUBA. WILLS SAID IT WAS TO BE EXPECTED THAT THE MILITARY REGIME IN BRAZIL WOULD TAKE A DIM VIEW OF ANY KIND OF CUBAN PRESENCE ON THE CONTINENT. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES IN THE BURNHAM GOVT HAD HOPED VENEZUELAN AUTHORITIES WOULD SEE CUBAN-GUYANA RAPPROCHEMENT IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT. UNFORTUNATELY, THE APPEARANCE OF A POSSIBLE CUBAN MILITARY PRESENCE IN GUYANA HAD SET OFF A SHOCK WAVE WITHIN THE VENEZUELAN MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT. WILLS SAID THAT ALTHOUGH VENEZUELA HAS LIVED AS A FREE DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY FOR OVER A DECADE, THE MILITARY IS BOTH STILL DECISIVE IN THAT COUNTRY, AND IN HIS JUDGMENT STILL UNDER AMERICAN INFLUENCE. THEREFORE THE CUBAN FACTOI HAD SERVED TOUNITE THE TWONEIGHBORING COLOSSI IN A COMMON APPROACH TO GUYANA, I.E. PRCISELY WHAT HAD BEEN GUYANA'S STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE TO PREVENT. AN ADDITIONAL OMINOUS NOTE IS PROVIDED AS COROLLARY TO THE EMERGENCE OF SURINAM AS AN INDEPENDENT NATION. THE GUYANESE HAVE BEGUN TO PICK UP CONCRETE INDICATIONS THAT VENEZUELA HAS OFFERED TO ASSIST THE SURINAM GOVT IN TRAINING AND EXPANDING ITS SMALL MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT, AND THERE ARE HINTS OF BOTH VENEZUELAN AND BRAZILIAN ENCOURAGEMENT TO SURINAM IN THE REACTIVATION OF ITS TERRITORIAL CLAIM IN SOUTHEAST GUYANA.

6. WILLS CLOSED BY SAYING THAT HE WANTED TO ASSURE ME IN THE STRICTEST CONFIDENCE, BUT WITH THE UTMOST SERIOUSNESS, THAT IN ANY FUTURE CUBAN MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA, GUYANA WOULD NOT RPT NOT ALLOW THE USE OF ITS TERRITORY AS A STAGING POINT FOR CUBAN OPERATIONS.

7. COMMENT: THROUGHOUT THE FOREGMANT EXPOSITION, I CONFINED MYSELF MOSTLY TO ASKING QUESTIONS FOR CLARIFICATION. HOWEVER WHEN
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WILLS CAME TO DISCUSS THE ALLEGED THREAT EMINATING FROM GUYANA'S NEIGHBORS, AND AT ONE POINT IMPLIED THE USG WAS ENCOURAGING THEM IN THIS DIRECTION, I BROKE INTO SAY THAT I WANTED TO REASSURE HIM, AS BOTH SECRETARY KISSINGER AND ASSISTANT SECY ROGERS HAD DONE WITHHIM AND WITH AMBASSADOR MANN THAT USG HAD NOT INSTIGATED THE BRAZILIANS OR THE VENEZUELIANS TO ENGAGE IN THREATENING ACTIVITY. AT THE SAME TIME, I THOUGHT THAT WILLS SHOULD NOT DELUDE HIMSELF INTO BELIEVING THAT THE VENEZUELIANS AND BRAZILIANS COULD REMAIN INDIFFERENT TO THE GROWING CUBAN INVOLVEMENT IN GUYANA. I SAID IT SEEMED TO ME THAT GUYANA IN ITS OWNINTEREST SHOULD TAKE A HARD LOOK AT THE NATURE AND DIRECTION OF ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH CUBA AND ASK ITSELF CONTINOUSLY WHAT WERE THE POSSIBLE RISKS INVOLVED AS OPOSED TO THE PROSPECTIVE GAINS FROM SPECIFIC NEW VENTURES IN THEIR CONTACT WITH CUBA.

8. I AM NOT INCLINED TO GIVE A GREAT DEAL OF WEIGHT TO WILLS' CONCLUDING ASSURANCE ABOUT THE DENIAL OF GUYANESE STATING FACILITIES TO THE CUBANS IN LIGHT OF HIS EARLIER REMARKS TO THE EFFECT THAT

HE CUBANS WOULD PROBABLY NOT NEED THESE FACILITIES AND, IN
ADDITION, BURNHAM'S PUBLIC AFFIRMATION TO THE EFFECT THAT WHERE
AFRICAN LIBERATION WAS INVOLVED HE WAS PREPARED TO GIVE UNSTINTING
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